

Aug. 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

Audience members. Barbara! Barbara! Barbara!

The President. You tell them we stand for family and faith and one Nation under God. And then go tell the gridlocked Congress and Governor Clinton: If you can't run with the big dogs, stay under the porch.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Riverchase Galleria shopping mall. In his remarks, he referred to Emory Fowler, Mayor of Montgomery. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the National Affairs Briefing in Dallas, Texas

August 22, 1992

Thank you very much. Hey, listen, this is a nonpolitical gathering. Thank you. Life is not fair. For me to get up here after Dr. Adrian Rogers, one of the great religious leaders of this country, it just doesn't seem fair. Adrian, thank you, sir, for that introduction. I mean, seven standing ovations in the introduction, my heavens, what's going on here? [*Laughter*]

But I am so pleased to be here. I have great respect for the man that did the introducing and so many here with us tonight. I'd like to recognize a true fighter for the American family. I heard him when Barbara and I were standing in the wings; we heard him. I'm talking about one of this Nation's truly great and, I would say, spiritual Governors, Governor John Ashcroft from Missouri. He gets it on his own and also from his wonderful dad that is so well known to, I'm sure, many people here.

Thanks to Deneé Varnum for that singing and the First Baptist Church choir and orchestra for that assist on "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." May I salute—I think Congressmen Sam Johnson of Dallas and Dick Armey of a neighboring district are here with us tonight, both doing a superb job.

Of course, another old friend for Barbara and me, now doing a superb job for this city, Mayor Steve Bartlett. You're lucky to have him. You Dallas folks are lucky to have him as your leader.

In my line of work, loyalty and friendship really count, and I want to single out Dr. Jerry Falwell, who is with us tonight, because he sure fits that description as far as the Bush family goes. I'm sorry that I

missed Dr. E.V. Hill. I was with him in his church in South Central out there in Los Angeles. I understand he just wowed them here tonight. But here's a real man of the cloth and a man I respect enormously. I wish he were here now.

Of course, special thanks to our organizer and wonderfully dedicated chairman, Ed McAteer; a man who I was sitting next to, he and I go back many, many years out here in Texas, and he was reminding me of a meeting we had some 36 years ago out in west Texas, Ed Drake, chairman of the national NAB. Or is he the local chairman? Which are you? Local chairman, all right. And Dr. Jack Graham, the chairman of the ministerial committee.

Let me just say it's a pleasure to be here. I've got a very difficult assignment. I plan to fulfill it to the letter. I was told that this is a nonpolitical event. We're just coming off of a fantastic campaign swing, so I'm going to cool it down, though, and talk about things that I think are near and dear to our hearts.

You see, we meet tonight at a time of great change. It's exciting change; makes me wish I were about 40 years younger at times. In both the world and our Nation this change is exciting. Changes are taking place, and they literally defy the imagination. I remember 10 years ago when one of God's great soldiers, a friend to all here, I'm sure, visited Europe and the Soviet Union. Returning to America, Dr. Billy Graham predicted that freedom would outlast tyranny. He'd sensed something as he traveled across that monolithic Communist empire.

The doubters said he'd been tricked. But Dr. Graham, Billy, knew something they didn't. He knew the chains of oppression forged by men were no match for the keys to salvation forged by God.

Over the past 3½ years, bayonets have been no match for the righteousness of God. Now, look to Bulgaria, where at last people wish Merry Christmas not only in the privacy of their homes but in public, in the streets. Look to Russia, where a cathedral that was called the All Union Museum of Religion and Atheism now houses God's apostles, or the former East Germany, where Bible studies are like bluebonnets in Texas in the spring, they're busting out all over.

In a season of thanksgiving the world says grace. And by God's providence the cold war is over, and freedom finished first. Because of the changes that have been wrought outside our Nation, our children and our grandchildren now sleep in the sweet sunshine of peace. And now it is our challenge, it is our sacred challenge, to build for them a nation that is as secure from the inside as it is safe from the outside.

I met not long ago with some of the mayors of our great cities in this country. It was the directors or the executive board of the National League of Cities. I asked what was the root of the ills with which they are afflicted in these cities, problems like crime, drug abuse, unemployment. They could have complained of the lack of Government money, but they didn't. They could have complained at the lack of Government programs, but they didn't. These mayors, including those from the other party, liberal, conservative, Republican, Democrat, large city, small city, said that all their problems could be traced to the breakdown of the American family. I would simply add to that, an erosion of traditional moral and religious values on which our very Nation was founded.

Some want us to get away from that. Some want us to get off of that theme, get away from that. I simply cannot do it. It is too fundamental. Leave out the election. It is fundamental that we restore and strengthen the American family.

Now, this week you saw a very charismatic, dynamic, insightful Bush family

member appear on television and talk to the Nation. I'm speaking, of course, of our First Lady, Barbara. By the way, I recall the Book of Proverbs said that "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged." Well, while I wouldn't quite put myself up there with the aged yet—some will, but I don't put myself there—I must tell you I felt like I was wearing a crown the other night when I listened to one of our grandkids, George P., speak to this Nation. This is a family night here, and I hope you'll understand how emotional Barbara and I felt when we saw this little guy get up. I asked him ahead of time, "Are you scared?" Oh, no, no, he wasn't scared at all. But he carried it off well, and he spoke from the heart.

Then yesterday, we were over in Gulfport, Mississippi, and then at this marvelous country music town of Branson, Missouri, and we saw a sign, "George P. in 2024. Viva Bush." It's wonderful, this politics. But you know, in a tough political year—it's been pretty tough, let's face it, and all the criticism, but it all subsides. It all gets into proper perspective when you see your own grandkid up there and can take pride in what your family does.

You know, Barbara in her speech said something I remember. She said, "To us, family means putting your arms around each other and being there." Now, those are truly words of insight and wisdom. When I speak of family values, of restoring a little moral and religious fiber to our Nation's diet, my opponents accuse me of mouthing slogans. But it is no slogan that America remains the most resolutely religious nation on God's great Earth. It is no slogan to say that America will always occupy a special place in God's heart. But that is true only as long as we keep Him in a special place in our hearts. So I believe that now that the world has become more like America, it is time for America to become more like herself. That means strengthening the American family, and yes, it means increasing our faith in God.

Government policy can make a difference. That's why I fought for changes—some that Steve was generous enough to talk about—in our welfare laws to encour-

age families to stay together, fathers to stick around, children to be able to save a little money when their mother's on welfare so they can get themselves educated. We've got to change the way the old welfare system has worked.

When Congress was considering a new law giving parents help with child care, I fought to make sure that parents would be able to choose the child care provider of their choice. I fought especially hard, and we were successful on this one, to allow care provided in religious settings. We had to fight, but we won that fight. You see, when it comes to deciding who should care for children when parents are working, I believe Government doesn't know best; parents know best. Parents should choose.

The same is true of education. I have spoken often of roots and wings. Wings, of course, are the subjects our children learn, math, science, English, that allow them to make their way in our complex world economy. But just as important are the roots, the moral values taught around the kitchen table or in our churches, and yes, as Dr. Rogers said, I believe, in our schools. For without roots our children will never fly in a moral and good direction.

Many parents want their children to attend religious schools, but they simply can't afford it. So I am fighting for a "GI bill" for children. It will give Federal money to working parents so that they can choose the best school for their children. The choice should include all schools, public, private, and religious.

I happen to believe that just as we fix our economy and improve our schools, we've got to strengthen our moral foundation. If I could make one political comment, I was struck by the fact that the other party took words to put together their platform but left out three simple letters, G-O-D. As you may have heard, Governor Casey of Pennsylvania was also shut out of the convention because he wanted to talk about the rights of the unborn. At least he's in good company. My party's platform is different. We are proud to celebrate our country's Judeo-Christian heritage unrivaled in the world. *[Applause]*

While you're still standing may I say, as I said, I happen to believe that all human

life is precious, born or unborn. I think it's ridiculous that a 13-year-old girl here in Dallas has to get her mother's permission to get her ears pierced in a mall but can get an abortion without telling her mom and dad. That doesn't make sense to me. I don't believe it makes sense to most Americans.

Something's wrong when kids can get birth control in school but can't say a prayer in school. If Congress can debate the merits of Vanna White appearing on the Home Shopping Network, surely Congress can find enough time to pass an amendment to allow our kids to thank God. So I call on the Congress again, and I'll keep calling on them to pass a constitutional amendment allowing voluntary prayer. Let us bring the faith of our fathers back to schools.

These are the kinds of issues that I care about and, certainly, I know you care about. So I'm not going to be dissuaded by the critics who call family values a cliché, who say that family values have no place in our national debate. I will ignore those who would rather not talk about a moral revival in America because I believe it is as important as any other challenge that we face.

Barbara and I have crisscrossed the country today, started out in Missouri, went to Georgia, spent our afternoon in Birmingham, Alabama, where a crowd of 20,000 people were kind enough to wait in the rain to see us. As we came out on the stage, singer Lee Greenwood was just beginning that marvelous anthem you know, a beautiful version of the song "I'm Proud To Be an American."

As I looked over the crowd, the rain was pouring down, falling, and I saw a little girl with blond ringlets perched upon her dad's shoulders. She had a little ball cap on her head, an American flag in one hand. As Lee Greenwood began to sing she began to wave the flag, and I looked and in her other hand she had scrawled a sign. All the rain had smudged the ink, but I could still make out the words "I love America. America loves God."

That little girl will grow up in a world filled with miracle medicines, a world where all the volumes of all the books in the Library of Congress will be able to be

stored on one tiny little disk. While scientific progress is good, it is my fervent hope that she will also come of age in a nation where family is always first and where the Creator is worshipped above all else. That is what has made America the greatest nation on God's Earth. It is our faith which will guarantee that the Sun never sets on our Nation.

I'm just delighted to have been with you. Thank you for inviting us. And may God bless this most wondrous land on the face of the Earth, the United States of America.

Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at the Dallas Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, TN; evangelists Jerry Falwell and Billy Graham; Edward V. Hill, pastor, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Los Angeles, CA; and National Affairs Briefing officers Ed McAteer, national chairman, Ed Drake, Dallas steering committee chairman, and Jack Graham, ministerial committee chairman.

Remarks to the Community in Springfield, Illinois

August 23, 1992

The President. Thank you, thank you. Thank you, Jim Edgar. You in Illinois are lucky to have Jim Edgar and Brenda here in Springfield, I'll tell you. And of course, I'm very pleased that Illinois' own Ed Madigan is our Secretary of Agriculture. He understands it, and he's doing a great job. May I salute Bob Kustra, the Lieutenant Governor, and his wife, Kathy; an old friend of mine, the secretary of state, George Ryan, and Lura Lynn. George has been at my side through a lot of political battles, and I'm very grateful to him.

May I salute a good Member of Congress; if we had more like him we wouldn't need to clean House. I'm talking about Representative Thomas Ewing here. And two others that I want to single out because as we talk about change, real change to help this country, we've got to change the Clinton-Gore gridlock Congress. We've got to change it. And in Rich Williamson running for the Senate, we have a man that can do just exactly that. He's with you on the values. He's with us on taxing less and spending less. He's with us on the fundamentals, and we must have him in the United States Senate. And I want to see John Shimkus elected from the 20th District.

I am going to do what Harry Truman did in this campaign. No, it's not give 'em hell, but they're going to think it's hell when

I get through with them. But here's what it is. Look, I'll tell you why I'm going to do it this way. For months, I've held out my hand to the Congress only to have it bitten off. And now I am starting right here in Illinois. The Congressman from this district voted against us on Desert Storm. He tried to bring legal papers against me. He is against the balanced budget amendment. And I want John Shimkus to replace him in the United States Congress.

We've had it. We've had it with this gridlocked Congress. The American people have told Barbara and me, "Here are our values." And they've said, agreed with me in the election, "Here's what we want to do." And it hasn't worked because the Congress blocks us at every turn. You've got to turn out these—no matter how nice they are, how kind they talk about the farmer when they come back here, look at the record. Don't let them talk one way in Illinois and vote differently in Washington, DC.

And let me just say it is really great to be back in Springfield. Lincoln, you recall, Abraham that is, said of this, he said, "To this place and the kindness of these people I owe everything." I think he had good taste in political parties. I think he had great taste in hometowns.